PU removes SZIC director over illegal tree felling

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab University (PU) on Wednesday removed the director of the Shaikh Zayed Islamic Centre (SZIC) following allegations of illegal tree cutting on the campus.

According to an official order issued by the university registrar, Vice Chancellor Dr Muhammad Ali Shah, in his capacity as SZIC Board of Governors chairman, relieved Prof Dr Muhammad Abdullah from his duties with immediate effect.

The decision came amid concerns over the unlawful cutting of trees at the centre.

The vice chancellor has appointed Prof Dr Samina Saadia as SZIC director as a stopgap arrangement.

A university spokesperson says Prof Saadia will continue to hold the charge until the federal government appoints a regular director.

A notification says that Prof Abdullah has been relieved of his duties, previously notified in March 2023, while copies of the order have been forwarded to the relevant university authorities for information and necessary action.

Commenting on the matter, the PU VC termed the illegal cutting of trees an unforgivable crime, adding that no leniency would be shown to those found involved in such acts. He stressed that protecting the university's green spaces and ensuring strict compliance with environmental laws remained a top priority of the administration.

KEMU student consumes poisonous pills

LAHORE: A female MBBS student of the King Edward Medical University (KEMU) reportedly consumed poisonous pills at the varsity's hostel on Wednesday.

As per initial reports, the girl was taken to the emergency ward of the Mayo Hospital by other students in the hostel when she was found in an unresponsive state.

The doctors immediately pumped her stomach besides providing relevant treatment.

A management officer said that the condition of the student was out of danger.

He claimed that the student (Y) took the extreme step soon after she had a heated argument with her parents during a phone call.

The official said that her parents reached the hospital after being alerted and told the management that she was disturbed over some financial issues.

The hospital was trying to engage senior faculty members for her psychological management, he said. — Staff Reporter

Two more dacoits surrender during Katcha operation

LAHORE: Rajanpur Police secured the surrender of two more wanted dacoits during the ongoing operation in the Katcha area of Rajanpur.

Acording to a Punjab Police spokesperson, the total number of dacoits who have surrendered so far reached 54 during the ongoing operation.

He said those who surrendered include ringleaders of various criminal gangs.

The surrendered dacoits, Abdul Majeed and Ghulam Nabi Umrani, were wanted in heinous cases including the martyrdom of police officials, murder, kidnapping, and robbery. The arrested dacoits would be awarded punishment in accordance with the law, the spokesperson added.

Rajanpur DPO Muhammad Imran said that a major police operation was underway in the areas of Katcha Karachi and Katcha Umrani, where the hideouts of dacoits were being targeted with the help of drone technology.

During the operation, several hideouts had been destroyed, while many dacoits had also been seriously injured.

Punjab IGP Dr Usman Anwar had issued instructions to continue actions against the Katcha criminals with greater speed and effectiveness. — **Dawn Report**

Lahore DC and ADCR changed

LAHORE: The Punjab government has replaced Lahore district's deputy commissioner and additional deputy commissioner (revenue).

The government transferred Syed Musa Raza and posted retired Capt Ali Ejaz as Lahore DC. Mr Raza has gone on a course, while Mr Ejaz was serving as PSO to the chief minister.

The government also transferred ADC (Revenue) Muhammad Sohaib Butt and placed his services at the disposal of the chief minister's office, Punjab, for further adjustment.

Hafiz Karim Dad, who was at the disposal of chief minister's office, has been transferred and posted as ADC (Revenue), Lahore. — Staff Reporter

LAHORE: A man prepares kites at his workplace in Sanda. — White Star

Tribunal rules against current management of Lahore Qalandars

Declares share transfer of Lahore Qalandars' parent firm void; younger Rana brothers ordered to return 51pc stake in KRR or pay Rs2.96bn

By Wajih Ahmad Sheikh

LAHORE: In a significant judgement, an arbitration tribunal, retired Justice Maqbool Baqer, has ruled against the current management of Kausar Rana Resources (Pvt) Limited (KRR), the parent company of the Lahore Qalandars, a franchise of the Pakistan Super League (PSL).

The tribunal found that the transfer of majority shares from Qatar Lubricants Company (Qalco) to brothers Atif Naeem Rana and Sameen Naeem Rana was legally void and lacked valid authorisation.

The tribunal has ordered the respondents to either pay Qalco Rs2.96 billion plus markup or immediately restore Qalco's 51 per cent majority shareholding in the company.

The dispute pitted Fawad Ahmed Rana, the Managing Director of Qalco and elder brother, against his younger brothers, Atif Rana and Sameen Rana.

Qalco originally secured the Lahore franchise rights from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) in 2015, later transferring those rights to KRR, where Qalco held 51pc shares at incorporation.

The core of the legal battle involved two disputed share transfers in 2018 and 2020, which the respondents/younger brothers claimed were necessary to circumvent UAE-Qatar geopolitical tensions during the Abu Dhabi T10 league.

They contend that, because the UAE had snapped ties with Qatar, it was not possible for an entity majorly held by Qalco to participate in activities in the UAE, therefore, Fawad Rana decided that Qalco would transfer 4pc of its shares to Atif Rana to make him the majority holder.

However, the Qalco and Fawad Rana alleged that these transfers were false, fabricated, and fraudulent.

The respondents also claimed that some amounts paid to KRR were for a hunt arranged by the younger brothers for His Highness Shaikh Sultan, Chairman and CEO, Qalco.

However, the claimants dispute this, asserting that no such purpose appears in statements of account, no evidence was produced and the respondents neither specified nor proved the amounts allegedly so received and spent.

In its judgement, the tribunal highlighted several critical failures in the respondents' case.

It noted that Fawad Rana provided travel history and passport copies proving he was not in Pakistan when the disputed transfer deeds were purportedly signed.

Under cross-examination, Sameen Rana admitted that the signatures of the attesting witness, KRR Company Secretary Farooq Anwar, did not match his known signatures, the tribunal observed.

It noted that the respondents failed to produce original transfer deeds and did not call key witnesses (Farooq Anwar and Imran Ahmed) to testify, despite them being available in Lahore.

It said the respondents admitted that no payment (via pay order or crossed cheque) was ever made for the shares, despite requirements in the purported offer letters.

A turning point in the proceedings was the revelation that the younger brothers had secretly sold 30pc of KRR shares to an individual named Mr. Niazi for $5million.

The claimants alleged this sale was concealed from both Qalco and the tribunal until it was exposed during cross-examination.

Justice Baqer dismissed the respondents' counterclaim of Rs50 billion, citing a lack of cogent material and credible evidence.

"The tribunal is constrained to hold that the transfer documents cannot be regarded as having been legally and validly executed, and in any event are void for want of consideration," said the judgement.

The tribunal ordered that within 45 days, the younger Rana brothers must pay Qalco Rs2.296bn with markup dating back to June 2020, or return the 51pc shareholding.

The judgement said the respondents must provide a full and true account of all profits earned by KRR and the proceeds from the $5 million "Niazi deal" to the company judge of the Lahore High Court.

It is pertinent to note that the present dispute was referred to the arbitration tribunal by the Supreme Court through a judgement on Dec 2, 2024. The petition was filed by the respondents against the dismissal of their application under Section 34 of the Arbitration Act in a petition for rectification of KRR's members' register.

WCLA launches Rs1.097bn Anarkali conservation plan

Facades of 71 buildings in Old and New Anarkali to be rehabilitated

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA), under the directives of the Punjab government, has initiated a comprehensive conservation and restoration work at Old Anarkali, one of the historical and culturally significant areas.

This major heritage initiative spans the historic stretch from Jain Temple to Lohari Gate, a corridor known for its rich architectural and cultural legacy. The project includes extensive infrastructure improvement works aimed at enhancing both functionality and visual coherence of the historic precinct.

The scope of work comprises street surfacing and landscaping, development of an underground electrical system with improved street illumination, installation of uniform signages for shops, placement of directional signage for visitors, and implementation of both hard and soft landscaping to revive the historic streetscape while maintaining its authenticity.

The total cost of the project is Rs1,097 million (Rs1.097 billion), reflecting the Punjab government's strong commitment to preserving Lahore's tangible cultural heritage. The project is scheduled to be completed by December 2027.

As part of the conservation drive, a total of 71 building façades in Old and New Anarkali are being rehabilitated to restore their original architectural character while ensuring structural stability and long-term preservation, of which 29 façades are located in Old Anarkali. In addition, 10 significant buildings situated in Old and New Anarkali are currently under restoration as part of this initiative.

The prominent buildings included within the project area are Old Anarkali Food Street, Bible Society New Anarkali, Nashaman Building, New Anarkali Bazaar, and Bakhshi Market. The conservation work aims to revive the historic character of Old Anarkali, enhance its aesthetic appeal, and safeguard its cultural and architectural value for future generations.

Highlighting the importance of the initiative, Director General WCLA Najmussaqib, stated: "Old Anarkali is a living symbol of Lahore's layered history. Through the restoration of 29 historic façades and key heritage buildings, along with comprehensive infrastructure improvements, WCLA is committed to preserving the city's architectural identity while creating a harmonious balance between heritage conservation and modern urban needs."

This conservation effort underscores the Punjab government's continued dedication to protecting the historic urban fabric and promoting sustainable cultural tourism. WCLA remains steadfast in its mission to conserve historic landmarks while revitalising traditional urban spaces across Lahore.

100 websites blocked for extorting money thru' PSCA e-challan

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has blocked over a 100 fake and phishing websites for illegally collecting online payments from the citizens by using the name and logo of the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA).

The action was initiated against these websites after the PSCA identified and recommended them to the PTA.

A spokesperson for the PSCA said that the authority marked the fake and phishing websites for defrauding citizens in the name of e-challan.

He said that these fraudulent websites were illegally collecting online payments from the citizens by misusing the names and logos of PSCA and e-challan, deliberately misleading the general public and were found involved in committing fraudulent financial activities.

The spokesperson suggested to the citizens not to make any e-challan payments on unverified, suspicious or unofficial websites.

For e-challan verification and payment, citizens were advised to use only the official Punjab Safe Cities Authority website (echallan.psca.gop.pk) or the Public Safety App.

He further stated that scope of the legal actions against individuals and groups involved in creating fake Safe City websites, fraud and public deception have been expanded.

A zero-tolerance policy is being strictly enforced to ensure financial protection of citizens. The PSCA remains committed to safeguarding public trust and financial security through modern technology, transparent systems and effective enforcement, while continuing to provide reliable and secure public services across the province, the spokesperson concludes.

Judges' transfer without their consent

Constitutional validity of 27th Amend challenged

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: A senior lawyer has approached the Lahore High Court (LHC), challenging the constitutional validity of the 27th Amendment, specifically targeting new provisions that allow for the transfer of superior court judges without their consent.

Advocate Asad Jamal filed a constitutional petition through Barrister Sameer Khosa, resting the core of the legal challenge on the amendment to Article 200, which now empowers the executive-dominated Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) to transfer high court judges between provinces, without their prior approval.

The petition argues that this requirement of consent is not merely a procedural formality, but an emphatic recognition of a judge's personal and professional stake in his posting.

It says the new framework introduced under the 27th Amendment strikes at one of its most fundamental and salient features — namely, the independence of the judiciary by empowering the executive to arbitrarily and unreasonably transfer judges of high courts to punish them whenever they appear to be acting independently or against the interests of the government of the day.

The petition argues that these amendments directly threaten judicial independence by subjecting judges to the risk of non-consensual transfers and punitive disciplinary proceedings in the event of refusal, thereby impairing their ability to function as independent and neutral arbiters of justice.

It points out that the requirement of consent (of the judge being transferred) and consultation with the chief justices (CJs) of the high courts was reintroduced under the 18th Amendment within Article 200 of the 1973 Constitution, to be applicable to all transfers of judges from one high court to another.

Additionally, the 18th Amendment also removed the punitive provision of "deemed resignation" upon refusing transfer.

The petition argues that the 18th Amendment that strengthened the independence of the judiciary, in consonance with the doctrine of separation of powers and provided security of tenure to a judge, has been done away with under the 27th Amendment.

It says that even in the Islamabad High Court judges' case the Supreme Court, in the majority verdict in 2025 prior to the 27th Amendment, had to declare that the requirement that no judge shall be transferred without his consent is an emphatic recognition of the judge's personal and professional stake in his posting.

The petition asks the court to declare that sections 41, 48(c)(iii) and 48(d)(ii) of the Constitution (27th Amendment) Act, 2025 and amendments made to articles 200 and 209 of the Constitution, violate the salient features of the Constitution, including the independence of the judiciary, rule of law, separation of powers and fundamental rights.

It also seeks a declaration to the effect that any actions, appointments, or decisions made by any person or body under the authority of, or pursuant to articles 200 and 209 as amended to be unlawful, illegal, and are therefore set aside as being unconstitutional.